

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
September 26, 2001**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on September 26, 2001, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present were: Chris Marr, Ed Barnes, Aubrey Davis, Elmira Forner, George Kargianis, and A. Michèle Maher.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Barnes, and seconded by Commissioner Maher, to approve the minutes of the August 7, August 15, and August 21, 2001 Commission meetings. The motion was approved unanimously.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY REPORTS

Secretary MacDonald informed the Commission that the Secretary's Office moved to the first floor across from the Commission Board Room.

Secretary MacDonald then introduced Colleen Jollie, the new WSDOT Tribal Liaison. Ms. Jollie briefed the Commission on her background and experience, and indicated that she would provide the Commission with copies of a report on tribal tourism activities and the tribal directory. She stated that her mission is to improve understanding and communication between the Department and the tribes.

Secretary MacDonald reported that the Department is recruiting for someone to provide liaison to the federal government, an ombudsman, and a communication manager. Recruitment of the Washington State Ferries director and the Aviation Division director also continues.

Secretary MacDonald and Terry McCarthy, Acting Director of Washington State Ferries (WSF), briefed the Commission on the response to the September 11th terrorist attacks. The Department had emergency procedures in place and they were implemented. A "lessons learned" exercise will be undertaken, and the recommendations from that effort will be integrated into the procedures, as well as any federally proposed security programs. Mr. McCarthy indicated that the Tariff Policy Committee would be meeting the next day and would assess the impact of the reduced travel on fare revenue. Secretary MacDonald suggested that the Department would also be looking at passenger rail service and how to improve the balance in the transportation system between air and rail service.

Secretary MacDonald distributed several news articles. The articles described successful completion of the I-90 widening in the Spokane area and the rapid response to spills on the highway near Everett. He also reported on an op-ed piece in the Daily Journal of Commerce discussing the Department's more aggressive approach to accident management, and pointed out that safer driving and fewer accidents would result in reduced traffic congestion. He discussed the installation of ramp metering on SR 520 and

the web page information that was prepared to improve public understanding of the purpose of the project. The Department received quite a few emails in response to the implementation of ramp metering on SR 520, and responded to each of them with the web page information. The Commission discussed with the Secretary several ideas regarding how to better communicate with the public. Secretary MacDonald assured the Commission that all possible tools and approaches are being considered in developing an improved communication program.

Secretary MacDonald informed the Commission that the Department would be reviewing the 24/7 policy regarding the operations of the HOV system. The Department will determine whether there is a better way to accommodate the volume of traffic. He stated that the Department would provide a copy of the analysis to the Commission and seek Commission guidance regarding the continuation of the policy.

Secretary MacDonald reported that the Executive Committee of the I-405 Project is sponsoring a series of meetings regarding the EIS, which has generated a lot of interest. The construction of a flyover ramp at the interchange of I-405 and SR 167 is a small but important piece of the larger corridor program.

Secretary MacDonald reviewed with the Commission a handout entitled, "What's going on in Washington with Transportation Funding?" The charts clearly show that the demand on the transportation system has increased significantly during the past twenty years, while the proportion of income devoted to transportation investment has not kept up.

Secretary MacDonald asked Paula Hammond, Chief of Staff, and Judy Giniger, Aviation Division, to discuss the impact of the FAA rules regarding general aviation. They discussed the impact of the restrictions on flights on the small airports, and presented a letter that the Department proposed the Commission send to USDOT Secretary Mineta calling his attention to the need to protect the long-term viability of the airports and of general aviation.

It was moved by Commissioner Barnes and seconded by Commissioner Maher to approve sending the letter to Secretary Mineta. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Giniger stated that a study of small airports is being conducted by Washington State University. She indicated she would return to the Commission at a future date to report on its findings. She also stated she would report to the Commission the results of the October 27, 2001, Aviation Conference in Spokane.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Barnes reported on his experience in being in San Francisco after the September 11th attacks, and the difficulty in arranging transportation home. He stated the country and the state need to assess the transportation system in light of the attack, and take steps to diversify so that there are alternative national and regional modes of transportation. He called for investment in east-west passenger rail in addition to the north-south passenger rail, and other investments that would enable people and goods to travel as needed.

Commissioner Kargianis stated his support for Commissioner Barnes' position. He also reported that he has been actively participating in the I-405 Environmental Impact Statement outreach process. He stated that the presentation being used for the outreach has a particularly effective style.

Commissioner Forner reported that she attended a workshop on the use of managed lanes, and expressed her concern over the ability to convince the traveling public to adapt to policy maker expectations. She also reported that Chris Rose, Commission Administrator, came to Chelan earlier in the week to meet with her to discuss her interests and perspectives, they participated in a tour with Don Senn, Regional Administrator and Dan Sarles, Assistant Region Administrator for Development. The tour focused on traveling the rural areas of the region around Chelan and SR 97, looking at the needs of the local businesses in relation to the transportation system. She commented that in meetings with local government staff, she is finding that there is very little awareness of the Washington Transportation Plan, which is a problem that needs to be addressed. Commissioner Forner also reported on her attendance at the Senate Transportation Committee meeting the previous day.

Commissioner Maher reported that she attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the North Spokane Freeway. She also met with John Karl, who is the economic development staff person for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, to discuss the BNSF business plan. She indicated she would be organizing a meeting between the BNSF and the WSDOT Rail Office. Commissioner Maher also reported on her attendance of a Port of Quincy presentation to Senator Murray on its planned investment in cold storage facilities and container yards. She also briefed the Commission on a meeting held by Dale Steadman in Spokane to update the local community leaders on what had, and had not, happened in response to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation's recommendations.

Commissioner Davis reported the House Democratic Caucus daylong workshop on transportation, which he and Commissioner Marr participated in, as well as Secretary MacDonald and several Department staff. He also briefed the Commission on the ongoing progress of the PSRC transportation-pricing project.

Commissioner Marr reported that he participated in the North Corridor Freeway groundbreaking ceremony in Spokane. He also participated in the commissioners' comments about the draft Washington Transportation Plan, and indicated that he understood the comments were very helpful to staff. He added his comments regarding the House Democratic Caucus meeting on transportation, indicating that 24 members were in attendance, many of whom are not on the House Transportation Committee. Commissioner Marr stated that the recent experience of the Eastern Region in looking at alternatives for connecting the North Corridor Freeway to I-90 led him to the conclusion that the Commission and Department need to educate the public as to why and how an environmental impact statement is pursued, and what it means to review alternative solutions to the transportation problem. He suggested mailing to neighborhoods an information flyer as to why their neighborhood is involved in an EIS. Commissioner

Marr took note of a letter from Gordon Campbell, Premier of British Columbia, to Commissioner Forner, expressing his sympathy for the victims of the September 11th attack and his strong continued support for cooperation between Canada and the United States, and British Columbia and Washington, on transportation and security issues. Commissioner Marr stated that it would be important to continue to cement relations between British Columbia and Washington.

ENVIROMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Jerry Alb, Director, Environmental Services, briefed the Commission regarding the Department's work on the development and implementation of an environmental management system, and the relationship of a proposed environmental policy to that management system. The policy will form the basis for all further environmental work by the Department. Secretary MacDonald presented a revised draft policy, and discussed the differences and the rationale for the changes. Mr. Alb requested the Commission's endorsement of the Secretary's adoption of the policy.

Senator Dan Swecker, who is serving as the chair of the Environmental Permit Streamlining Committee, commented on the process of passing the legislation on environmental permit streamlining and the bipartisan support the bill received. He stated that the new law and the environmental management system would make the permit process more efficient. He offered his opinion that the project is getting good staff and consultant support. He invited the Commission members to call him at any time to discuss this project or any other issues of concern.

Mr. Alb then briefed the Commission on the progress of the project to-date, and the next steps to be taken.

It was moved by Commissioner Barnes, and seconded by Commissioner Maher, to endorse the environmental policy adopted by the Secretary, and the environmental compliance strategy presented by staff. The motion was approved unanimously.

DRAFT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND PRESERVATION PLAN

Commissioner Marr opened the discussion by commending the Department on the new format of the plan. Secretary MacDonald added his commendation, indicating the staff worked very hard to make the improvements. Secretary MacDonald then discussed the goals of the plan and the purpose and approach to highlighting thirty-five projects in the front of the plan.

Rick Smith, Director, planning and Capital Program Management, thanked Doreen Sinclair, Authorizations and Operations Manager and Aaron Butters, Capital Programs Management, Operations Manager for their work, and also thanked the many other employees within the Department for their work on the plan. He informed the Commission that the document is still a draft, and that the project costs and timing would continue to be refined during the next couple of weeks. He stated that the plan would be presented for approval at the October 17, 2001, Commission meeting. Mr. Smith briefly

reviewed the format and content of the plan, and the differences between this draft and the legislative list produced at the end of the legislative session.

Terry McCarthy, Acting Director, WSF, described the previously unprogrammed projects for the WSF contained in the draft plan, and the logic for making the changes.

Mr. Smith then discussed the Department's proposal to provide an additional \$5 million in funding for the Trans-Lake Washington project. The Commission discussed with him what would happen if the Legislature did not approve the additional funding requested in the 2002 Supplemental Budget being proposed for approval later in the day. Mr. Smith stated that the Improvement-Mobility subprogram would be adjusted as necessary to keep the project progressing through the biennium.

Jim Slakey, Director, Public Transportation & Rail Office, briefed the Commission on the proposed capital projects for the passenger and freight rail programs.

LUNCH MEETING WITH THE OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND THE GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE POLICY STAFF

The Commission and the representatives of the Governor's Executive Policy Office and the Office of Financial Management discussed the status of General Fund revenues, the Department's proposal for a 2002 supplemental budget, the pending transportation revenue forecast, and the Governor's discussions with legislative leadership regarding a transportation funding proposal.

2002 TRANSPORTATION SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

Bill Ford, Chief, WSDOT Budget Office, briefed the Commission on the proposed 2002 Supplemental Budget and distributed revisions to the draft provided to the Commission members prior to the meeting. He stated the Department was proposing the addition of a decision package to provide funding for additional security measures on the Washington State Ferries. Mr. McCarthy described in detail the WSF decision packages, including the funding for additional security. Mr. McCarthy acknowledged the letter received from the City of Edmonds requesting that funding be provided for the Edmonds Multi-modal Terminal.

It was moved by Commissioner Davis and seconded by Commissioner Kargianis to add \$2.2 million to the supplemental budget request, to provide funding for the Edmonds multi-modal terminal. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Smith briefed the Commission regarding the \$444.7 million in highway improvement projects proposed under the new law portion of the supplemental budget. Mr. Slakey then briefed the Commission on the proposed funding for the rail program, and the pending federal legislation's anticipated contribution to funding the program.

It was moved by Commissioner Barnes, and seconded by Commissioner Kargianis, to approve the proposed 2002 Supplemental Budget request as described in Attachment A and Attachment B, with the addition of the \$2.2 million in funding for the Edmonds multi-modal terminal. The motion was

approved unanimously.

SOUND TRANSIT PROGRAM UPDATE

Dave Dye, Urban Corridors Administrator, stated that the presentation would update the Commission regarding the progress of the Sound Transit program and the Department's coordination with Sound Transit.

Renee Montgelas, Public Transportation and Rail Administrator, advised the Commission that the Sound Transit Board would be considering whether to continue with plans to build the north segment of the light rail line or to build the central segment from downtown Seattle to the SeaTac vicinity instead. She described the issues to be considered in that decision, and indicated that it was the Secretary's intention to support the change in plans to pursue the central segment. Ms. Montgelas then briefed the Commission on the progress being made in implementing the Sounder Commuter Rail program, which has seen ridership grow in one year from 5,000 riders per day to 12,000 riders to day. She reported on pending issues with the Sounder Commuter Program, including discussions between Sound Transit and the Department regarding concerns over the ability to accommodate future inter-city passenger rail in the Lakewood-Tacoma segment. She closed her briefing with a report on the status of the I-90 two-way transit project, which is awaiting a final decision whether to initiate an EIS process or reconsider the options available to the Department.

COMMISSION'S FY02 AGENDA WORK PLAN

Mr. Rose and Paula Hammond, WSDOT Chief of Staff, presented the draft Commission FY02 Agenda Work Plan for review by the Commission. The Commission reviewed the proposed changes in the basic agenda topic list, and accepted those changes. In addition, the Commission reviewed the proposed specific month-by-month presentations and discussions within the topical headings, and accepted those as well. The Commission requested that under the Washington Transportation Plan agenda heading, that Mr. Rose insert a discussion of the lessons learned from the WTP update, and the development of a process for the next update.

Commissioner Marr reported that Mr. Rose was finishing the interviewing of each commissioner, and that the results were very informative. He asked that Mr. Rose format the information into three reports: a summary for feedback to individual commissioners, a summary of all the interviews for use by the officers, and a summary for use by the Secretary's Office.

PUBLIC AND LEGISLATOR COMMENT PERIOD

Paul Locke expressed his concerns regarding Sound Transit.

TACOMA NARROWS BRIDGE REPORT

Ms. Hammond reviewed with the Commission the questions asked of the Department as a result of the August Commission meeting discussion, and the answers developed by the Department staff. In response to a question about advanced

engineering, she stated that the Department would consult with the Commission prior to proceeding with advanced engineering, if that option appears worth pursuing.

Commissioner Marr recognized Don Williams, who commented on the Department's continued expenditure of funds on the project.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m. on September 26, 2001.